

# The Icelandic Canadian

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## THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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## EDITORIAL

# Communication Through the Ages and Our Literary Heritage

The distinctive feature that separates man from the lower animals is his ability to **think**. This has been attributed by scientists to the relatively large brain possessed by human beings as compared with all other animals. To illustrate, a human infant at birth, though weighing perhaps only 5 to 6 pounds, has a much larger brain than a full grown whale which might weigh up to 10 tons.

Human beings are at birth the weakest of all animals, possessing no instincts, and absolutely dependent on others for food and protection. A young spider, on the other hand, hatches out of the egg ready for an independent existence, possessing a bundle of complicated instincts, which enable it immediately, to begin spinning a web and catching insects for food. We are helpless though the human infant is at birth, it yet has an ability to learn, possessed by other animals, and thus potential mastery over the whole animal kingdom.

The possession of a large brain enables human beings to use the power of thought in spoken and written language. Of these, written (or printed) language is of far greater importance for preservation of our intellectual heritage. Knowledge transmitted by the spoken word, as from father to son, is necessarily fragmentary and incomplete. It is only by means of written language that we have a storehouse of the past, a veritable Aladdin's cave of precious jewels, is open to us.

Nevertheless spoken language has precedence over written language in the cultural development of the human race and also in the mental development of the human individual. Language of some kind is characteristic of all human races existing today, and in the opinion of anthropologists even the primitive Neanderthal man is believed to have been able to communicate with his fellows by means of speech.

Although in the development of the human child his first screams and wails are simply preliminary exercises of his vocal organs, yet little by little he gains more and more control of his lips, tongue and vocal chords, until in a surprisingly short time he can imitate sounds made by his parents and others about him. At first the sounds he utters are meaningless to him, but gradually they become associated with ideas. The sounds he makes are at first very imitations of speech sounds. But gradually the child's pronunciation comes to conform to that of his parents and his community.

The ideas associated with words are also at first very inaccurate. But gradually words acquire more and more meaning and the child learns to use

ink and speak in phrases and later sentences.

The beginnings of written language reach far back into the mists of antiquity and include the cuneiform inscriptions of the ancient Persians, Babylonians and Egyptians, the early pictographic, the scrolls of the early Chinese, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Old Turkish, Gothic, Old Icelandic, etc. The exact pronunciation of ancient languages has of course been lost since, unfortunately, no tape recordings of ancient speech have been preserved together with the written records.

From the early beginnings of picture-writing and primitive written records man has advanced to the development of great literature. Almost all nations have made greater or lesser contributions. An attempt to list the part played by scholars of various nations would more than fill the space available for this article. A few sketchy references must, therefore suffice. Amongst the Greeks the epics of Homer, the plays of Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, and the philosophical writings of Plato were massive contributions to the world's literature. The Icelandic Sagas are valuable not only because of high literary merit, but also for the historic records they provide, as well as for the link provided by Icelandic with other Germanic languages. Great literature reaches its peak in the plays of Goethe and Shakespeare.

The great literature of the past provides an endless source of enjoyment for our leisure moments as well as providing useful knowledge. Physicists of today have the benefits of the contributions made by Galileo, Newton and Einstein on which to build as they attempt further discoveries. Bacteriologists have the benefit of the work of Leuwenhoek, Pasteur and Fleming as

they study new methods of controlling or preventing the spread of disease. Scientists are constantly building on such foundations, and we have daily evidence of the value of their discoveries in promoting our comfort and lengthening our days. Similarly today's authors of prose and poetry have the advantage of being able to study the great literature of the past as a basis for their own literary efforts.

It is interesting to note that our Icelandic cousins, who have remained in the land of our forefathers, have maintained the literary traditions of the authors of the Eddas and the Sagas. I believe that it is no exaggeration to say that no nation, in proportion to population, has as high a production of literature as has the tiny island from which we have sprung. As to the excellence of that literature, we have evidence in the translation of many works into English, French, German and other languages. The recent award of a Nobel prize for literature to an Icelander is further evidence, if any were needed, of the esteem in which Icelandic literature is held.

On this side of the Atlantic we have also some evidence that the literary talents prized by our forebears have not lain entirely dormant. Though of excellent quality the quantity of literary production of our Western Icelanders (*Vestur-Íslendingar*) is, unfortunately, meagre. Perhaps if more of us had the opportunity of visiting, and, if possible, residing in Iceland for a year or two we might be stimulated to make a more notable contribution to the world's literature. At any rate the example set by our Icelandic cousins may provide for us a powerful incentive to attempt to rival their achievements.

**Ingolfur Gilbert Arnason**

# Iceland's Unquenchable Flame

By MEKKIN SVEINSSON PERKINS

Through the ages poetry has been a never-failing source of inspiration to the people of Iceland. It helped keep up their flagging spirits during centuries when disaster followed on the heels of disaster. It played an important role in their struggle for liberation from a foreign master. To this day it remains an uplifting influence in the life of even the humblest citizens.

The Vikings who colonized Iceland back in the ninth century brought poetry with them from Norway when they fled rather than bow to Harald Fairhair who had just proclaimed himself king. In the new land they established a republic with a national assembly, the Althing, which met annually at Thingvellir, a place destined to become a symbol of liberty.

The flame of poetry burned brightly in this atmosphere of political freedom. The cultural life of the colonists centered around the meetings of the Althing. Here the poets recited their verse for the entertainment of the throng. They also performed at feasts held in the great halls of the homes where horns filled with the poetic mead were passed around to inspire their minds and loosen their tongues.

The Icelandic skalds, or poets, were numerous. The poetic talent, often passed from father to son, was freely exercised both in public and private. Poets were among the most highly honored of men.

Many of the skalds of the early republic sought fame and fortune abroad. Received with honor, they

served at the courts of noble kings, often becoming confidants and favorites of their patrons. Their rewards were great: bejeweled brooches and rings, finely wrought weapons, magnificent garments, even ships with goods.

No poet received greater reward than did Egill Skallagrímsson, of the saga of that name and famous of the early Icelandic skalds.

Attached to the court of King Æthelstan of England, he served with distinction as warrior and poet. Once, upon returning from a visit to his home in Northumberland, in the domain of Eirik Bloodaxe and his queen Guthilda, whose wrath he had incurred. At the queen's instigation, he was condemned to die at dawn. Acting on the advice of a friend at court, during that one night he composed and committed to memory a poem of 160 stanzas in praise of King Eirik. This literary eulogy he recited in the morning before the astonished monarch who received his pardon as a reward.

Besides court poetry extolling deeds and magnanimity of noble kings, there has come down to us from this prosperous era of Icelandic history a remarkable work, of unknown authorship, the Elder or Poetic Edda. This original manuscript, presently in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, is considered one of the world's literary treasures.

In theme the Poetic Edda covers a wide range: Norse mythology, the philosophy of life, poetic verse.



Norse and Germanic legends. In its lines are short, consisting of four or five syllables. Seldom, they have a pattern created by alliteration such as that found in Anglo-Saxon poetry, an alliteration that characterizes Icelandic poetry to this day.

By the first half of the 13th century the poetic flame had begun to flicker. Recognizing this fact, Snorri Sturluson, famed poet and historian, wrote a first book for poets, known as the *Younger, or Prose, Edda*.

In this unique work he began by presenting subject matter considered essential to verse of that day: Norse mythology. He then proceeded to give instruction in the use of the poetic language, including long lists of metaphorical descriptive terms known as "kennings." Some of these "kennings" are far-fetched and so complex as to be unintelligible; others have a subtle and profound meaning. For instance, the earth was called "Odin's ride"; the sun, "the sister of the moon"; summer, "the comfort of carpents." A ship was referred to as a "sea swan", a "sea horse", or a "sealing's steed"; a sword in action was known as a "wound snake." Through these instructions Snorri Sturluson hoped to breathe life into the spark of poetry still smoldering in the breasts of the young men of his day.

By the time of his death, however, affairs in Iceland were chaotic. Not long afterwards (1262), the people took a step that was to affect not only their economic life but their cultural pursuits for centuries to come. They gave up their independence.

Ever since colonization days the kings of Norway had repeatedly tried to gain dominion over Iceland. There was constant intercourse between the two countries. Icelandic poets were

favorites at the Norwegian court. Snorri Sturluson spent much time there gathering material for his history of the early kings of Norway—the *Heimskringla*. When, in the 13th century, dissension broke out among the leaders in Iceland, the reigning king of Norway intervened, finally persuading the Icelanders to submit to his rule. Thus the early republic came to an end, and with it the Golden Age of Icelandic literature. In 1380, Iceland, along with Norway, came under Danish rule. Not until June 17, 1944, was the republic again established.

During the centuries of foreign rule conditions in Iceland grew steadily worse. Times were hard; the weather unfavourable. Earthquakes, disease and famine plagued the people. Epidemics raged. At one time the Black Death swept the country. There were years when the Arctic ice floes filled the fjords in the north and east until late summer. The volcanoes, of which Iceland has more than a hundred, repeatedly erupted, bringing death and destruction. To make matters worse, the Danes established a trade monopoly, so that even in good years the natives were unable to reap the harvest of their labors. Eking out a miserable existence in their crude turf hovels, the people sorely needed consolation.

They found it in their religion and the ancient art of poetry, whose embers still glowed in spite of adversity. Before the Reformation there were epics on Catholic themes; after it, hymnals to which the best poets among the clergy contributed. Religious poetry reached its height in the work of the revered pastor, Hallgrímur Pétursson, whose 50 Passion Psalms depicting the suffering of the Savior on the Cross are unsurpassed in their emotional appeal.

Besides consolation, the people in their isolated farmhouses needed entertainment. For this, too, they turned to poetry. By the 14th century lengthy ballads known as *rímur*, with varied alliterative patterns, became very popular. For five centuries the members of practically every household in Iceland listened with delight to the chanting of these stirring lays of love, bloody conflict or adventure, as they sat at their work in the long winter evenings, cleaning, carding, spinning and knitting the wool, or carving utensils and repairing their tools. They thrilled to the rhythmic, alliteratives of the deeds of heroes of their glorious past, the tales of Norwegian kings, romances of the knights of King Arthur, of Charlemagne, Roland and others.

The peasant poets provided them with an abundance of these lays. One versifier reputedly composed 627 verses, of 2,322 lines, in three days while watching over his flocks. The clergy contributed lays on Biblical subjects to offset the influence of the worldly variety.

Although not a high form of poetry, the *rímur* nevertheless served to keep alive the spark of the ancient art against the day when it would serve a nobler purpose in rousing the slumbering spirit of liberty in the Icelandic people.

When that day came, the Icelandic people, cowed by foreign tyranny, worn down by hunger, poverty and natural disasters, had become despondent. During the 18th century they suffered their most crippling blows. In 1783 a volcanic eruption of unprecedented violence poured rivers of molten lava and showers of poisonous ashes over the countryside, killing livestock and human beings by the thousand and even driving the fish from

the shores. Starvation ravaged the land. Conditions became so desperate that the Danish Government seriously considered abandoning Iceland and moving the survivors to Denmark.

The 19th century, however, found the Icelandic people still in their homeland, struggling against adversity—despondent, defeated. They no longer had a voice in the management of their own affairs. Their venerable constitution, a shadow of its former self, was finally abolished in 1800 by royal decree. The ruling Danes continued to exploit them. Poor food, inadequate housing and disease sapped their strength. On an average, only one in every two children born lived to adulthood.

When matters had reached this desperate state, four gifted young Icelanders in Copenhagen, who as students had come under the influence of the spirit of liberty emanating from the French Revolution, decided to act. They realized that to avert national annihilation, their countrymen must be roused from their lethargy and made to demand the right to handle their own affairs. To this end, they started a campaign by founding a publication to appeal to the patriotic and pride of their people.

In this campaign for freedom the spark of poetry was fanned into a burning flame. One of the editors of the new publication, Jónas Hallgrímsson, the most beloved lyric poet Iceland ever produced, sounded the call to action in the very first issue with his stirring poem "Iceland." In ringing phrases he appealed to his countrymen, reminding them of the beauty and grandeur of the land that was theirs; of the glorious past; of the desire for independence and prosperity. The land was as beautiful as ever. Where was the spirit of freedom?

did the Icelandic people no longer meet at Thingvellir to make their laws and handle their own affairs? Why was that cradle of liberty turned over to the ravens? In prose and sonorous lyrics, Jónas Hallgrímsson employed his talent to rouse his countrymen. Never did poetry serve a nobler cause! And to some purpose. Trusting and loving this patriot who sang to them in unforgettable verse, the people listened.

After several years the publication established for the campaign died, but the fight had already been taken up, to be pursued with unrelenting energy by the patriot and statesman, Jón Sigurðsson. Poetry continued to play a role. The talented young poet Steingrímur Thorsteinsson took up the refrain and with his lyrics challenged the people to action in the cause of liberty.

Success came in degrees. The Althing was restored in 1845. In this new assembly, which met in Reykjavík instead of at Thingvellir, sat representatives of the Danish crown as well as representatives of the Icelandic people. This first victory was followed by a greater one in 1874. Then King Christian IX of Denmark visited Iceland to attend the celebration of the

millenary of the settlement of the country and brought as a present a constitution.

The celebration was held both in Reykjavík and at Thingvellir. Although Jónas Hallgrímsson did not live to see that day, poetry held a high place in the ceremonies. For the occasion a young clergyman, Matthías Jochumsson, destined to become the leading poet of his time, wrote an inspired hymn, "Iceland's Thousand Years," which today is the country's national anthem.

With the national awakening came a gradual improvement in living conditions, as well as a vigorous literary activity. Again poetry flourished as never before since the era of the ancient skalds.

To this day the flame of poetry continues to burn brightly in Iceland. At public gatherings poets recite their work, whether in the traditional alliterative form or of some modern variety. The lyrics of favorite poets, set to music, are sung with fervor. Books of poetry are found in even the homes of the humblest citizens. And Halldór Kiljan Laxness, an Icelandic author whose prose is replete with poetry, has won the coveted international Nobel prize for literature.



The success of this magazine depends to a large extent upon the contributions sent in from its subscribers and friends, scattered all over North America. They may be formal, well prepared articles such as the above, poems, translations, news items of general

interest or even local in nature. Good short stories are of course always welcome. It is in this way that the magazine can reach out to people of Icelandic extraction and their associates and thus maintain an essential esprit de corps.

## TWO QUESTIONS AFFECTING ICELAND SETTLEMENT

We, as citizens of Canada or of the United States, are interested in the settlement of any question affecting the free world nations in their defence of the Western democratic system. We are not only interested but directly concerned if the problems to be settled arise between nations with which Canada has entered into an agreement as for instance nations which are members of Nato. The interest and concern become personal when one of the parties is Iceland, the land from which we have derived, that island out in the North Atlantic for which we all still have such a fond attachment.

It was therefore of special interest and a matter of rejoicing when we learned that two disturbing problems affecting Iceland and its people had been amicably settled. The reference is to the question raised in regard to the presence of American troops in Iceland and to the retaliatory measures taken by the British trawlers against Icelandic trawlers of denying them access to British ports because Iceland had extended its territorial waters from three miles to four miles.

The Department of External Affairs in Ottawa was, for many reasons, keenly interested and no doubt followed development in the negotiations very closely. The Icelandic Canadian is indebted to the Department for having made available to it a press despatch setting out the essentials of the agreement between the United States and Iceland on the troop question and the text in full of the agreement between the British and Icelandic trawlers on the fisheries dispute.

The press despatch is published in

full below, followed by a summary of the agreement between the respective Trawler Associations.

### UNITED STATES — ICELAND DEFENSE NEGOTIATION December 6, 1956

The Governments of the United States and Iceland have agreed that recent developments in world affairs and the continuing threat to the security of Iceland and the Atlantic Community call for the presence of defense forces in Iceland under the United States-Iceland Defense Agreement of 1951, and therefore that the discussion requested by the Government of Iceland concerning the revision of the Agreement at the withdrawal of the Defense Force should be discontinued.

It has also been decided to set up a committee for high-level consultation between the two Governments on matters affecting defense arrangements. In this manner it is hoped that future problems can be reviewed and discussed as they develop and that the need for formal negotiations under Article VII of the Agreement can be avoided.

The North Atlantic Council has been informed of the foregoing and has welcomed the arrangements which have been made.

These agreements are embodied in a series of exchanges of notes in Reykjavik today, the substantive parts of which read as follows:

Recognizing the traditional friendship expressed by the Government of Iceland to its adherence to the North Atlantic Organization relating to the stationing of forces in Iceland and the fact that the decision as to the presence of the defense forces in Iceland rests with the Government of Iceland, the Governments of Iceland and the United States have held discussions concerning the revision of the Defense Agreement and the withdrawal of the defense forces. They have reached an understanding that the development of the world affairs affects



continuing threat to the security of Iceland and the North Atlantic Community call for the presence of defense forces in Iceland under the Defense Agreement and therefore decided:

1. That discussions concerning the revision of the Defense Agreement for the purpose of the withdrawal of the defense force will be discontinued until notice is given according to paragraph 2. below.

2. That the six-month period of notice provided for in Article VII of the Defense Agreement will start to run when either government gives notice.

3. That a standing group will study defense needs in the light of the development of world conditions and make recommendations to the governments how to meet these problems.

4. That an Icelandic defense standing group consisting of not more than three senior representatives of each government will be constituted for the following purposes:

I. To consult from time to time as to the defense needs of Iceland and the North Atlantic area, to consider arrangements appropriate to meeting such needs and, taking into account the general political and military situation, to make recommendations to the two governments.

II. To make preparations consistent with military readiness for a broader participation by Icelandic nationals in the performance of functions connected with defense insofar as qualified personnel are available, and to assure the establishment of training programs appropriate to this purpose.

III. To endeavor to resolve general problems of policy with regard to the relations between the Icelandic people and the defense force.

#### DIGEST OF THE TRAWLER AGREEMENT

The Agreement, made in Paris, dated November 14, 1956, came into effect the following day, is concluded

for a period of ten years and is signed by authority of the Union of Icelandic Trawler Owners, and by authority of the British Trawlers Federation and the Aberdeen Fishing Vessels Owners' Association.

2. A Joint Committee consisting of not more than six representatives of each Party is to be set up to ensure the smooth working of the Agreement. The Committee may, with due authorisation from both Parties, make such alterations in and adaptation of the Agreement as they may mutually agree upon.

3. The Agreement stipulates that, subject to a few minor conditions, values of the imports of Icelandic-caught fresh fish on ice into the United Kingdom market shall not exceed in each quarter year the sum of £450,000.

4. Icelandic fishing vessel owners may determine themselves at which port in the United Kingdom their fish shall be landed. Their vessels shall conform to all port regulations in the same way as British vessels.

5. At the ports of Hull, Grimsby, Fleetwood and Aberdeen, Icelandic vessels shall, for the order of their landings, and within the conditions laid down in the Agreement, be treated in the same manner as British vessels landing at these ports.

6. The Agreement does not limit the freedom of imports of frozen and boxed fish from Iceland into the United Kingdom.

7. Both Parties agree, through their respective governments, to request the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) to keep in existence a Special Group for the purpose of conciliation in case the Parties fail



to agree on questions that may arise in regard to the following:

(a) Imports of Icelandic frozen and boxed fish into the United Kingdom have, in the opinion of one of the Parties, increased to such an extent as to disturb the stability of the market in fresh fish on ice. In such case limitations, as provided in the Agreement, may be placed on the imports of frozen and boxed fish from Iceland.

(b) Revision of the Agreement, which may be requested by either Party after the expiry of one initial

period of two years.

(c) Revision of the Agreement at the expiry of the initial period of two years on the special grounds that the basic conditions for the application of the Agreement have substantially changed.

N.B. If an agreement for revision under either (b) or (c) above, after consultation with the Special Group of OEEC, cannot be reached within one month the original Agreement, without revision, shall remain in force until its expiry date.



## In The Editors Confidence

The Editorial Board desires to draw the attention of readers to that brief but very revealing address of Professor W. A. Packer in this issue. To those who feel that the Icelandic language may as well disappear it is an awakening; to those who at times despair of its future it is a challenge.

— — — — —

It is a matter of both rejoicing and regret that we have run out of copies of the Winter 1956 issue of the magazine—rejoicing that so many people are interested and regret that copies are not available to new subscribers

who would like to have at least the Christmas issue included in their subscription.

Some people do not retain magazines—a practice which the Board does not want to encourage, at least in the case of The Icelandic Canadian. It has occurred to the Board that some subscribers might be willing to return to the last Christmas issue. Until present anticipated orders are filled the magazine will pay 25 cents for each copy of that issue. Copies may be sent to either the Chairman of the Board or to the Business and Circulation Manager.

# THE ICELANDIC ANGLO-SAXON TRADITION

By W. A. PACKER

Professor of German, United College, Winnipeg

You've all heard the joke which an unkind critic made about the English: One Englishman—a birdwatcher, two Englishmen—a cricket match, three Englishmen—the British Empire. It is rather difficult to realize that the Icelanders have pretty much the same reputation in European history. In the great migrations following upon the break-up of the Roman Empire the Norsemen plundered most of Europe and the Mediterranean area—they occupied parts of Ireland, England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Russia, the Byzantine Empire. The friendly faces of Manitoba Icelanders show no signs of that Viking terror which caused Europeans to offer a special prayer: "God, deliver us from the fury of the Northmen!"

Today the Icelandic language is a source of pleasure and satisfaction to scholars and literary men for a reason which is almost unique in European linguistic history. Its history is entwined with that of English from start to finish. To begin with, Icelandic is a branch of the Germanic language, just as is English—we can consider them sister languages. Both of them belong to the family of languages which covers most of Europe from French along the Atlantic to Russian-Slavic along the Urals. Two thousand years ago the ancestors of both English and Icelandic spoke dialects of what was the same language. When the Roman Empire vanished the Anglo-Saxons moved into England, and the Norsemen occupied almost everything else that was

left of the coasts of Europe. In fact, the Norsemen—Icelanders tried to occupy England too, and almost succeeded.

The occupation of central and north England by Scandinavians including Icelanders has left marks on the English language which persists still today. Many of our commonest words—mine, thine, bring, come, hear, they, them—come from Scandinavian. In fact Old Norse, i.e. Icelandic, was spoken in the far northern parts of Scotland until the 17th century.

It is not however this exceedingly close connection between Icelandic and English which today interests the scholars. They are attracted by two features of Icelandic which distinguish it from all other Germanic languages. (1) Icelandic has changed amazingly little in the last 1000 years, so that a modern Icelanders can read material composed in the early middle ages without difficulty. This is a feat which is impossible in English, French, or German. Icelandic is one of our best sources of information about the older forms of all Germanic languages. (2) Icelandic sagas are a storehouse of information about the literature of the Germanic tribes, so that much of our knowledge of the literature and customs of English and German tribes, as well as Norse, is based on what we can surmise from the magnificent records which Icelandic story-tellers have kept of the Germanic myths. Neither English nor German epics are equal in breadth to the numerous Icelandic ones. We all

feel a deep debt of gratitude to the efforts of Icelandic skalds and scholars in maintaining their tradition.

And now, in Manitoba, the Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon traditions cross and entwine once more. Here, the second largest Icelandic community in the world is united with the English-speaking community, and after 2000 years of separation the two languages and two peoples have come together in a spirit of cooperation which will result in great things for the province of

Manitoba in the years that lie ahead of us.

**Ed. Note.** The above succinct and peculiarly timely remarks, setting out the relations between Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic, were made at a luncheon held in the Hudson Bay Store on February 19, to which Judge W. J. Lindsay invited sixty representative men, all of whom had a common interest by birth or association in the subject placed in such clear perspective by Professor Packer, who is Professor of German in United College, which is affiliated with the University of Manitoba. Professor Packer received his university education in Toronto.



## RESURRECTION

The rain is like  
the breaking of the sleep  
in tombs; hushed words  
coolly unfolding the lily . . .

(We rise now, too  
in the yellow of forgotten flowers . . .  
sprout in the mystic leaf,  
the unremembered grass we have become)

The rain is like  
a rushing sigh of leaves,  
long gone, and yet to come.

—Esther Wellington

# THIS CHANGING CANADA

by G. S. THORVALDSON, Q.C.

The reason for my title, "This Changing Canada", must be clear to any Canadian who has observed the pattern of development of our country during the past few decades. During this time, Canada has indeed been the fastest growing country in the world and the changes that have occurred in every phase of our environment have been no less than amazing.

To my mind, the most outstanding individual fact in this growth has been our rapidly increasing power and prestige in the international sphere. This change has become manifest, firstly, in our increasing influence in that grouping of free and independent nations comprising the British Commonwealth; and then of course in the much larger sphere of the United Nations organization.

This increased prestige results not only from our population and economic growth but also from the fact that leaders of business, industry and government in our country have been playing an increasingly greater and more effective part in the affairs of the world around us.

The first reaction of anyone looking at the map of Canada must be its enormous land and lake area. For instance, we have been prone to speak of our three thousand miles undefended border between ourselves and our great neighbor on the south. Indeed, however, Canada's breadth is much more than this because the distance from St. Johns, Newfoundland, to the westerly side of Vancouver Island is much nearer five thousand than three thousand miles. And also our distance

from south to north runs into thousands of miles. This huge area has, as we know, an amazing variety of climates and precipitation and contains also a variety and abundance of natural resources which are more and more becoming the wonder of the world.

Sometimes I think that we Canadians, busy as we are with our everyday tasks, fail to fully observe the vastness and rapidity of our national development. On a visit to Europe two years ago, I had a good view of Canada from the outside. Stationed in those crowded islands of Great Britain with their tiny area and large population; also with their 2000 years of recorded history one becomes immediately aware of a sense of contrast between the new and the old worlds.

Although it is now a little more than 400 years since Jacques Cartier first sailed up the St. Lawrence, it is only some 300 years since permanent settlement really began on the St. Lawrence and in the Maritime provinces. It is only 200 years since permanent settlement began in what is now Ontario. Those famous bands of Red River settlers arrived here first less than 150 years ago and development, as we know it today, of the prairie West and even British Columbia commenced only about 75 years ago. What a new country we are!

This brief history of our country may well be recalled in a score or so of names and phrases—explorer, trapper, the fur trade, voyageur, coureurs de bois, Jesuit, lumberjack, sourdough, Frontenac, Montcalm, Wolfe, United

Empire Loyalist, Hudson's Bay Company, La Verendrye, The Family Compact, Reformers and Clear Grits, Clergy Reserves, Mackenzie, Papineau, Lord Selkirk, Lord Durham, and Lord Elgin.

These names, words and phrases are to me a panorama of the birth and early development of the land that we now know as Canada. And in more modern times the Canadian story is effectively recalled by names such as Sir John A. Macdonald, George Brown, Alexander Mackenzie, Cartier, Tupper, Tilley, Howe, D'Arcy McGee and the others of the so-called Fathers of Confederation.

It was the genius and courage of these men who, in the face of overwhelming difficulties, united the bits and pieces of a vast area to form the empire which we now know as Canada.

Our American cousins have immortalized such names as Tom Paine, Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln. These founders of our country that I have mentioned fully deserve a similar regard and affection from those of us now, in Canada, enjoying the result of their genius.

Speaking of Canada's recent economic development, a friend of mine once remarked, "Canada is 3,695,000 miles of opportunity." Such indeed is a fact. At the dawn of the present century Canada was merely a narrow ribbon stretching out from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans and on the average only a hundred miles or so from North to South. The large majority of Canadians lived within this long and narrow strip of territory.

To me, the two most significant facts of our economic growth are, first, a transition from a mainly agricultural economy to a predominantly industrial society and, second, the discovery dur-

ing the last half-century of a vast storehouse of petroleum, minerals and waterpower resources, both in the middle and in the hinterlands of this country. Consequently, and with the aid of the scientific and technical knowledge now available to an industrious and intelligent people, a giant industrial economy is being built on the foundation of these great natural resources.

And so it is, that in the last few years or less our population has doubled; in the same period great metropolitan areas such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver have trebled and more in size; and with all this growth the standard of life and living of Canadians generally has increased immeasurably, and is now second only to that of the people of the United States of America.

These things have been achieved not by the application of controversial economic doctrines or questionable social theories but rather by the application of technical knowledge and the human skills, initiative and enterprise of a free people, to the circumstances of our times.

Having, in the last few moments emphasized our material progress, it is no part of my purpose, however, to fail to give proper place to what is indeed more fundamental than any other possession. I refer to our background and heritage of political and economic freedom. The roots of this heritage lie deep. In the first place they are founded on the principles of freedom imbedded in the common law of England and secondly in the historical traditions and aspirations of the various people who came here from other lands—who came seeking freedom from want, freedom from persecution, freedom from war and freedom to apply their skills and intelligence to the material resources of a new country.



So we may well be proud of the operation of our democratic processes in Canada. And while enjoying a pride in our parliamentary institutions, we of Icelandic stock, need not be unmindful of the fact that the oldest continuous parliament in the world was established by our forebears in Iceland over one thousand years ago. This was indeed an event in history of great importance to all generations to come.

So much for ourselves alone. But let us not minimize the fact that Canada is now one of the great world powers. As such it owes heavy responsibilities both in helping to maintain the peace of the world as well as assisting in the raising of the standards of living of various peoples elsewhere. In these twin tasks we can take pride in our strength as a Nation, in our free partnership with the United States in the defence of the North American Continent, in our place as one of the partners in the British Commonwealth of Nations, in our association as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato) and in the very important role that we have come to assume in the United Nations itself.

Also in the field of helping other less fortunate or backward peoples to raise their standard of life, we, in as-

sociation with the United States and other countries, are pouring our wealth into the many international organizations which have been created for the purpose of these humanitarian tasks.

It is merely a platitude to say that Canadians are unanimous in their hope and optimism for the future of our country. However, nothing is really secure in the dangerous world in which we live. But to me, there are certain principles and objectives which are eternal in time and without which the democratic processes that we know cannot forever survive.

The first of these objectives is peace among nations, abolition of armaments and the final acceptance of the principle that international disputes must be settled by debate and advocacy rather than by resort to arms. Second, there must be continuing emphasis on learning and education in all its forms. And thirdly, we must have a sense of unfailing mutual respect and tolerance between persons, creeds and classes in our Nation.

Given these attributes, we should not fail, in "This Changing Canada," to continue to enjoy, and indeed to have multiplied, the material and spiritual bounty which has become the birthright of Canadians.

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## Copies of The Icelandic Canadian Wanted

As we are short of a few issues of the magazine in order to offer full sets for sale, we would like to buy these issues at \$1.00 each: Volume 1, No. 1 and No 3; Volume 2, No 3. These are to be mailed to: THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN, 869 Garfield St. Winnipeg 10, Manitoba.

## Jakobina Johnson Visits San Francisco Bay Area

**Jakobina Johnson**, Icelandic-American Poet-Laureate and translator, visited this San Francisco Bay Area for about ten days in January last.

This area includes the cities of Oakland and Berkeley, as well as smaller cities and towns skirting the shores of the San Francisco Bay, directly across from San Francisco—being joined to the Metropolis by the famous eight mile San Francisco Oakland Bridge.

Mrs. Johnson was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Vigfus Jakobson, and of Vigfus and Halldor Helgason of Oakland, California.

Among numerous affairs held in honour of Mrs. Johnson was a large gathering invited to the palatial home of Dr. and Mrs. K. S. Eymundson of San Francisco. As newly-elected president of the American-Icelandic Association of Northern California, Dr. Eymundson welcomed the guest of honour and other guests and friends.

The Icelandic Consul, Reverend S. O. Thorlakson, introduced the poetess.

Mrs. Johnson gave a brief talk in English on Icelandic poetry and literature, explaining that it was not of the dramatic style, but Classic. In her humble manner she told the audience her own creations were but exercises and that it did not matter much what present-time value was placed upon them. These were but preparatory exercises to be continued, she hoped, in the life hereafter. She then read several of her English originals and translations, finishing the second half of the program with her Icelandic originals. Her rendition was most appealingly

and artistically performed and the beauty of her art will linger for a long time in the memories of those who had the pleasure of hearing her the evening.

A male double-trio under the direction of Louise Gudmunds sang to groups of Icelandic folk songs and later led in community singing. The personnel was as follows: Carl Magnusson formerly of Arborg, Manitoba now a United States citizen, Halldor and Vigfus Helgason, Steinthor Gudmunds, Sveinn Olafson, (all from Iceland but permanent residents of the U.S.A.), and Lyman Lorensen, an American.

Mrs. Johnson's translations have been included in the American Singing book series which is used in schools over the United States. Her translations are in Number Four of the Series. Also, her translation of the Icelandic National Anthem appears in the National Anthems of the United Nations and their Allies (1943).

Following the program a sumptuous spread of Icelandic and American delicacies were served by Mrs. Eymundson who is a culinary artist.

While in this Area, Mrs. Johnson was invited to lecture at Harknell College, Salinas, California, as the guest of Professor Loftur Bjarnason, who comes from Utah.

Reported by

LOUISE GUDMUNDSON

Representative of The Icelandic Canadian in the San Francisco Bay Area

## Dr. Richard Beck in Action



To write about Dr. Richard Beck and his achievements is impossible. His manuscripts and articles are followed by other accomplishments equally important.

At the latest three-day convention of the Icelandic National League, held in Winnipeg, February 18-20, Dr. Beck was elected President of the organization. He is not a newcomer to the League; and in the past he served much more than an apprenticeship to that office. Shortly after he arrived in North America in 1922, he became a member of the League, in the course of time he was elevated to the Vice-Presidency, and in 1940 to the Presidency, an office he held for six years.

On the retirement of Dr. V. J. Eylands from the office of President, Dr. Beck was unanimously elected to succeed him. Rev. P. M. Petursson continued in the Vice-Presidency.

In 1930, as a literary record of Iceland's Millennial Celebration of the founding of Althing (Parliament), Dr. Beck published a book entitled "Icelandic Lyrics, Originals and Translations". It consists of a collection of English translations from Icelandic poetry during the previous one hundred years, a period, which, as Dr. Beck says in the introduction, is often spoken of as "a renaissance in Icelandic Letters". Aside from the excellence of choice of translations, selected and edited by Dr. Beck, this book of 270 pages has two distinguishing features. The original as well as the translation is published, the original on the left hand page and the translation on the right hand page. Etchings or drawings of the poets, made by the artist Tryggvi Magnússon of Iceland, with brief introductory notes by the editor, preface the selections from each of the authors. They are artistically done and portray to the reader more of the character and feeling, the very soul of the poet than would a modern photograph. The one on "Bólu-Hjálmar" is reproduced as an example.

The advantage, for the permanent record, of publishing side by side the original as well as the translation of gems of poetry and prose of abiding value was given authoritative recognition by the Anglo-Icelandic group of men of letters, headed by Dr. Sigurður Nordal and G. Turville-Petre, who made arrangements in 1950 with Thomas Nelson & Sons in Edinburgh, for the publication of the Icelandic Sagas and other Icelandic Classics in both the original text and in English. The Icelandic Canadian has in its modest efforts followed these excellent precedents.

The original Icelandic Lyrics, of which several thousand copies were sold, has been out of print for many years, but last year a new photostatic edition of the book appeared, lithographed and printed in Iceland. The



**Hjalmar Jónsson**  
(1796-1875)

Hjalmar Jónsson was born in Hallandi in the North of Iceland. He never attended school, but acquired good education through his own efforts. From 1820 until his death he was a farmer in Skagafjörður; for a number of years at Bólu; hence he is referred to as Bólu-Hjalmar. His life was a continuous struggle with poverty and adversity. A selection from his poem, *Kvæði og kviðlingar* (Poems and ditties) appeared in 1888. A more inclusive edition was published in 1915-1919.

N.B.—The above is an exact copy, slightly reduced in size, of one of the preface pages.

Cover Verse poem in this issue is taken from this collection.

In 1943 Dr. Beck edited a book of translations into English from modern Icelandic literature published by the American-Scandinavian Foundation, under the title "Icelandic Poems and

Stories". The book contains poems and short stories, translations only and many of the selections have appeared in the Icelandic Canadian. The Magazine Committee and, indeed, the readers are much indebted to both Dr. Richard Beck and The American Scandinavian Foundation.

Last fall the University of North Dakota News Service tried to catch up with Dr. Beck in a News Letter which sets out that "Dr. Richard Beck, University of North Dakota, professor of Scandinavian Languages and Literature, and foreign language department head, recently delivered his one thousandth public address since he came to the University in the fall of 1929." The Letter reveals what Dr. Beck regards his most important address:

"His most important address, Dr. Beck said, was the one delivered in Iceland June 17, 1944, to an assembly of 25,000 to 30,000 people at the founding of the Icelandic Republic, which took place at historic Thingvellir, the famed site of the more than one-thousand-year-old Icelandic Parliament (Althing). He attended this great national celebration as the official representative of the Icelanders in the United States and Canada, as well as the representative of the State of North Dakota, and special guest of the Icelandic government."

The writer hastens to deliver the message to the printer lest another news item reaches him of some more recent achievement of this versatile and energetic man. —W. J. Lindal



## AN INNOVATION

The Icelandic Canadian has for some time had in mind to publish Icelandic music in which both the poetry and composition are by Icelanders. A considerable expense is involved in that plates have to be taken of the sheet music and that may have been one of the deterrents but a start is going to be made and if the reaction from readers is favorable this special feature will be continued. As this is an English language magazine a translation of the poem must accompany the original.

The beautiful little poem is by Thorsteinn Erlingsson (1858—1914), one of Iceland's latter nineteenth century poets. He studied in Copenhagen but did not graduate, went back to Iceland and for several years was engaged in journalism. His poems "Þyrnir", Thorns, of which there were three editions, included many patriotic and love lyrics.

The composer of the music is Gunn-

steinn Eyjolfsson (1866—1910), one of our western composers. He was born in Iceland and when ten years old came to Canada in the large group of immigrants who settled in "Nýja Ísland", New Iceland in 1876. He named the farmstead on which he later settled "Unaland", a land or home of enjoyment. Gunnsteinn composed a number of songs and wrote music for choirs. His music was collected and published in one book in 1936 in Winnipeg under the title "Sönglög", Songs. Gunnsteinn Eyjolfsson was a poet as well as a composer of music and wrote short stories which were published a few years ago under the title of the leading and popular story "Jón á strympu".

The translator is Eiríkur Magnússon, M.A. who resided in England for a number of years. One of his translations is Iceland's National Anthem "O Guð vors lands". The translation of the poem selected follows:

### It Grieves Me

It grieves me, beside much that hides in my mind,  
How weary this world is without you;  
What calms me the most, oh my darling, I find  
Is thinking and writing about you.  
Your loving embraces, so sweetly your own,  
Your converse, my mem'ry rehearses;  
And so, for the ease of my heart all alone,  
I rest here composing my verses.

And this too I know, where I toss or I rove,  
What else from my mem'ry may perish,  
The things we admired I shall mind me and love,  
And fondly embrace them and cherish.  
When darkens the season of short-growing days,  
And shadows entangle my going  
I trust in these stars to illumine my ways,  
Like those in the dome of night glowing.



# MIG HRYGGIR SVO MARGT

Sopr. Alto. Tenor. Bass.

*p*

Mig hrygg-ir svo margt, sem í hug mín--um felst, og

hvernig jeg breyt-ist að lif---a, og mjer finst það, vin--a mín

hvíl-a mig helst að hugs-a um þig eð---a skrif---a; að

*mf* að minn-ast á arm-lög þín ást--rík og

minn--ast á arm-lög þín ást-rík og góð og alt sem að

*mf* að minn-ast á arm-lög þín ást--rík og

In childhood the want was persistently mine  
 On silent air gazing to ponder;  
 And still 'tis my habit to ask and divine  
 Where o'er the wide world I may wander.  
 But whereso I roam may my thoughts keep awake  
 Beside you at all times and places,  
 And well may it chance that my last sleep I take  
 In spirit within your embraces.

góð og alt sem að þú hef-ur tal-að:  
 ást-rik og bú hef-ur tal-að:  
 góð og alt sem að þú hef-ur tal-að:  
 Pv1

ligg jeg hjer al-einn og yrk-i nú ljóð,  
 yrk-i nú ljóð,  
 Pv1 ligg jeg hjer al-einn og yrk-i nú ljóð

það eitt gæt-i hug-an-um sval-að.

Eins veit jeg það, hvert sem mig hrekur og ber  
 og hverju sem annars jeg gleymi,  
 þá man jeg þó alt, sem jeg unni með þjer  
 og elska það, faðma og geymi;  
 og þegar að dimmir við skammdegis skeið  
 og skuggarnir þjettast um fætur,  
 þá vona jeg stjörnur þær lýsi mjer leið  
 sem leiftur á bláhveli nætur.

Jeg man það sem barn, að jeg margsinnis lá  
 og mændi út í þegjandi geiminn,  
 og enn get jeg verið að spyrja og spá,  
 hvar sporin mín liggi yfir heiminn;  
 en hvar sem þau verða mun hugurinn minn  
 við hlið þína margsinnis standa,  
 og vel getur verið í síðasta sinn  
 jeg sofni við faðm þinn í anda.

—P. Erlingsson

## HEIM, AÐEINS HEIM

eftir JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

Þýtt hefur PALL BJARNASON

Þótt hallir og glaumur sé hvar, sem eg fer,  
Er heimilið bezt, hversu lágt sem það er.  
Sá heillandi seiður því helgaður var,  
Sem hvergi á jörðu er til, nema þar.

Heim, heim, aðeins heim!

Hve langt, sem eg flækist, er löngunin heim.

Í útleigð við ljómann eg unað ei fæ,  
Því altaf eg þrái minn lágrefa bæ,  
Þar söngfuglinn tefur og frá mér ei flýr  
Og fagnaðar-rósemd í huganum býr.

Heim, heim, aðeins heim!

Hve langt, sem eg flækist, er löngunin heim.

— — — — —

Far vel kæra óðal! Eg aldrei kemst heim,  
Því örlög mig swift hafa fögnuði þeim.  
En hvar sem eg ráfa, um höf eða lönd,  
Skal hjartað þig geyma, unz kveður mín önd.

Heim, heim, aðeins heim!

Hve langt, sem eg flækist, er löngunin heim.

## Home, Sweet Home

by JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,  
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;  
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,  
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.

Home, home, sweet, sweet home,

Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.



# THE COVER VERSE

The Cover Verse is the last of three stanzas translated by Sir William A. Craigie from the Icelandic poem "Ísland", composed by Steingrímur Thorsteinsson.

Steingrímur Bjarnason Thorsteinsson was one of the latter nineteenth century men of letters of Iceland (1831-1913). A graduate of Menntaskólinn (College) in Reykjavík, he studied philology in Copenhagen and obtained the degree of Cand. Phil. (candidatus philologiae) in 1863. His first book of poems was published in 1881, and consecutively enlarged editions appeared in 1893, 1910 and 1925. Steingrímur Thorsteinsson wrote extensively in prose as well as in verse and translated into Icelandic masterpieces of literature such as Anderson's Fairy Tales and Shakespeare's King Lear. Many of his lyrics have been set to music; "Swansong on the Moorlands," Svana-söngur á heiði, is one of the most popular of our Icelandic songs. Steingrímur was a master of satire, especially in cutting epigrams as for instance "Mountain and Hillock", which has been translated by Jakobina Johnson:

A lowly hillock raised its head  
And to a lofty mountain said:  
"Your innate pride and haughty mien

Are rueful in the distance seen".  
The mountain neither moved nor  
spoke,  
It knew not who the silence broke

Sir William A. Craigie is an internationally known scholar, born and brought up in Scotland, former Professor of Anglo-Saxon in Oxford. He spent a year in Copenhagen studying Scandinavian languages, with special emphasis on Icelandic, and ever since that time has been an admirer of the literary accomplishments of the Icelandic people. He has mastered the language to the extent that he is able to translate the thought and feeling of Icelandic poetry into equally rhythmic English verse.

In the fall of 1951 Thomas Nelson & Sons of Britain undertook to have the Icelandic Sagas translated into English, the original text to appear on one page and the corresponding English translation on the other. The editors-in-chief are Dr. Sigurður Nordal and G. Turville-Petre. The work is in the hands of a committee of fourteen eminent scholars and Sir William heads the eight members of the committee from the United Kingdom.

The three translated stanzas and the original follow.

## ICELAND

Translated by WILLIAM A. CRAIGIE

White island-dame by dark blue deeps  
That watchest sad by warriors tomb,  
From out thine eyes in upper gloom  
The hail beats down on snow-bound steeps.

## ÍSLAND

Eftir STEINGRÍM THORSTEINSSON

Eykonan hvít við dimblátt djúp,  
er kappa vakir hrygg við hauga;  
þungbúnu hrýtur hagl af auga  
niður í fargan fannahjúp;



Thou weepst those who live  
 though dead  
 Where light through heaven's halls  
 is shed,  
 And sorrowing lookest proudly forth.  
 Toward the clear skies of the North.

Gone is the time when near and far  
 Valkyries rode in lightning's flash,  
 Mid din of swords and bucklers' crash,  
 And kissed the hardy sons of war.  
 When ships with shields above their  
 oars  
 Came sailing to thy frosty shores,  
 And heroes sprung from royal line  
 Chose here to die as sons of thine.

Teach us our fathers' steps to tread  
 In new achievements, mother old,  
 That life may come to deserts cold,  
 And spring succeed to winter dead.  
 Gaze not behind towards the past,  
 But forward where thy fame shall last,  
 And while thy helmet frowns above  
 Regard thy sons with eyes of love.

þú grætur þá, sem látnir lifa  
 þar ljósin Valaskjálfar bifa;  
 syrgjandi ber þú höfuð hátt  
 heiðskíra viður norðurátt.

Gengin er tíð, þá loft og lög  
 valkyrjur riðu í leiftra ljóma,  
 við sverða skin og skjaldarhljóma  
 og kysstu harðan hildar mög;  
 þegar að fleyin sköruð skjöldum,  
 skriðu að þínum ströndum köldum,  
 þá konungborið kappalið  
 kaus sér að deyja brjóst þitt við.

— — — — —

Kenn oss að feta í feðra spor  
 á ferli nýjum; móðir aldna,  
 að lifni storðin fönnum faldna.  
 og nöprum fylgi vetri vor;  
 frá harmi snúin horfins blóma,  
 heið þig í nýja tímans ljóma,  
 og undir hjálmi ægis blá  
 óskmögum sýndu hýra brá.

## Golden Wedding Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Olafur Hallson of Eriksdale, Manitoba, celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary Friday, February 22 last, at a family dinner at the home of their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Hallur Hallson, Eriksdale. They were also honoured by the community at an open-house in the Orange Hall.

Mr. and Mrs. Hallson were married

February 22, 1907, in Reykjavík, Iceland, and came to Canada in August, 1910. They lived in Oak Point until 1911, when they moved to Eriksdale.

They have four children, Hallur, Eriksdale; Mrs. I. Bergsteinsson, Orange, California; Mrs. G. O. Ryckman, and Mrs. H. W. McGlynn, both of Winnipeg. There are ten grandchildren and one great grandchild.



## JOHN F. GISLASON

Manager of Testing and Engineering Laboratory



Charles W. Britzius  
Technical Director

John F. Gislason  
Manager

of

### TWIN CITY TESTING and ENGINEERING LABORATORY INC.

An instance of one of Icelandic descent holding a place of prominence in modern industrial institutions and contributing to the progress of mankind, is found in the person of John F. Gislason, manager and vice-president of Twin City Testing and Engineering Laboratory Inc., St. Paul, Minnesota.

John Frederick Gislason is a son of John and Lukka Gislason, now 85 and 81 years of age who resided for many

years on "Stórhöll", a farm near Minneota, but at present reside in Minneota, Minn. John Gislason's father and mother migrated from Iceland in 1879 and according to Icelandic custom gave a name to their homestead and called it "Stórhöll". John Gislason Senior was at that time only seven years old. He grew up at Stórhöll, is self-educated, and was the State Representative for Lyon County for eight years, 1919-1925. In 1895 he married

Lukka Edvarðsdóttir whose parents on migrating to America from Iceland adopted the surname of Edwards.

Neither John nor Lukka had an opportunity to acquire much of a formal education but that opportunity was afforded their children. John Frederick Gislason attended Grade School in Lyon County and High School at Minneota College. Later he graduated from the University of Minnesota and subsequently completed his training at the Institute of Technology. His duties as manager of the Twin City Testing and Engineering Laboratory, Incorporated, are, with the assistance of a staff of highly trained

personnel of specialists in all fields, to render technical assistance to industry, consulting engineers, architects and private individuals by means of modern testing and inspection facilities in the field of chemistry, metallurgy, Applied Engineering, Soil Survey and Construction.

John F. Gislason was formerly associated with the Lyon County Highway Engineer's Office and was Administrative Engineer for the Federal Works Agency, all of which, in conjunction with his present contribution, places him in the category of an outstanding American citizen.

A. Isfeld

## BOOK REVIEW

By W. KRISTJANSON

**HEIMA ER BEZT (The Homeland is Best)**

Editor: Steindor Steindorsson, from Hlíðum.

Publisher: Bókaförlag Odds Björns-sonar.

Published at Akureyri, Iceland.

45 pp. 8 by 11. Annual subscription.

80 crowns.

**HEIMA ER BEZT (The Homeland is Best)** is an Icelandic popular monthly magazine, now in its seventh year of publication. It has a good literary standard, its contents are varied and it is copiously illustrated.

The October-November, 1956, issue to hand has a full page cover-picture of the President of Iceland.

The editorial on the role of the President of Iceland is brief but is a substantial contribution to the issue. It relates the oft-told story of how the Norse settlers of Iceland, the landnámsmenn, left Norway to be free of the domination and the centralizing power of Harold the Fairhaired. Under

the constitution of 930, when Althing was founded, there was no executive authority, and the leaders of the Sturlunga Age were more concerned with their personal enhancement than national freedom and welfare.

During the lengthy period when Iceland was under the sway of a foreign royal power, it was not to be expected that there could be growth of the understanding of the role of the head of the state.

In 1944, with the establishment of the Republic, Iceland had its first native head of state. There was divided opinion as to what his role or function should be. Some felt that he should be a powerful political leader, like the President of the United States. Others had the concept of the role of a king in a constitutional monarchy. The latter concept prevailed. The president is a symbol of the sovereign power of

the country rather than a power in the land.

The Icelanders are a contentious people, says the editorial, prone to look on themselves as individuals first. Thus it is imperative if the nation wishes to preserve its independence and honor that there be something in national life above the daily bickering and controversy, an inviolate institution which all can respect and love as a symbol of the best on which national life is founded: freedom and human rights.

Such an institution is the presidency. The President is inviolate, according to the constitution, and he should be inviolate, not merely on paper, but in the eyes of the entire nation. He is impartial in his conduct of the affairs of the country, free of the bias of party and class. He is a peacemaker and a conciliator, and not a bitter partisan leader. Abroad, he is the representative of a sovereign country. On him rests in a time of crisis the greatest responsibility and his actions may determine the fate of the country.

"The poets have chosen the Fjallkona as the symbol of our country. No Iclander would cause her disrespect,

by word or by deed. Let us be mindful at the same time that the President is the symbol of our nation and her independence at home and abroad."

The main feature in this issue of **Heima er Bezt** is a seventeen page article, with several full-page and smaller pictures, on the President of Iceland, including a biographical sketch and an account of his state visits abroad.

Other articles are on such varied subjects as occult manifestations, a review of a case before the Icelandic Supreme Court, the herring catch, and the Icelandic ballad (rima). There are two serial stories, translated.

Of rather special interest is the Young People's section, featuring an entertaining article on Helgafell and the beautiful view from the mountain over Breidafjord. Woven into the account is history and folklore. The eye rests on Hrapsey, where Eric the Red sheltered his ship prior to his first voyage to Greenland. The author is Stefan Jonsson.

**Heima er Bezt** will give pleasure to readers in America, as well as in Iceland.



Judy Allan

Judy Allan, grade five student at St. Thomas Moore School, Niagara Falls, Ontario, was the winner of the elementary Schools Section in the Junior Chamber of Commerce "Get Out The Vote" essay contest.

She wrote on the topic "Why Our Parents Should Vote" and was presented with a cheque by the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Walt Field.

Judy is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Allan (nee Emily Axdal of Wynyard, Saskatchewan.)



## The National League and Icelandic Canadian Club Concerts

The annual National League and the Icelandic Canadian Club concerts of 1957 were held in Winnipeg, February 18-20.

The "Frón" chapter of the National League held its concert (miðsvetrarmót) in the First Lutheran Church, February 18. Chairman was the President of "Frón", Jon Johnson.

Guest speaker was Reverend Olafur Skulason, of Mountain, North Dakota. The Chairman observed that Mr. Skulason was a close relative of the well-known Reverend Kjartan Helgason, of Iceland, who had been guest speaker at the first annual concert of "Frón", thirty-eight years ago. Mr. Skulason said that he had looked on Icelandic emigration as an Icelandic brook flowing into the ocean, but that on arrival in America he had felt heartened at the signs of virility of the Icelandic heritage in America.

In the excellent program there was good variety. Mrs. H. Barrie Day, (nee Lilja Eylands) sang by request Jon Fridfinnson's "Vögguljóð". Her other two numbers were Handel's "Where'er You Walk" and "Tárið". Miss Heather Sigurdson, I.O.D.E. Music scholarship winner, 1956, and ranking highest on the University of Manitoba School of Music examination in vocal music, in her year, made her first public appearance with three Icelandic numbers, "Sólskríkjan", "Erla", and "Kveldklukkan". Elmer Nordal, gifted baritone-bass, sang "Gígjan" and "Nótt", and two encores, "Old Man River" and "The Blind Plowman". Accompanists were Miss Corinne Day, Mrs. W. Kristjanson, and Miss Sigrid Bardal. Master Karl Thorsteinson played two piano solos: "Pánkar", by Sigvaldi Kaldalóns and Mazurka in B. Flat, by Chopin. This young pianist, twelve years of age, performed very

well and shows excellent promise.

Dr. Richard Beck recited an original poem in the Old Icelandic ode metre, "Erfðafé", the theme being the Icelandic heritage of language, saga, and music. Mrs. Ingibjorg Jonsson read a story, "Daily Bread", translated by herself from the English, originally written in the Hungarian by Ferenc Mora.

This Icelandic concert was opened with the singing of "O Canada" and "O Guð vors lands" and closed with "Eldgamla Isafold" and "God Save the Queen".

A special feature of the three day "mót" was a luncheon tendered by Judge W. J. Lindal to the guest speaker at the Icelandic Canadian Club concert, Mr. William Moore Benidickson, M.P. Some sixty guests were present at Judge Lindal's invitation. The luncheon was held in the Georgian Room, at the Hudson's Bay store. The gathering was widely representative not only of Canadians of Icelandic origin, but Canadians who had an "acquired" interest, as through marriage. It included members of the provincial legislature, University professors, newspaper men, and other professional and business men. Professor W. A. Packer, Professor of German at United College, one of the three professors studying Icelandic with Professor Bessason, spoke briefly in a felicitous and scholarly vein on the close association of the Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic languages, a thousand years ago and now today. Other members of the gathering spoke briefly.

The Icelandic Canadian Club annual concert was held Tuesday evening, at the First Lutheran Church. The President of the Club, Miss Mattie Halldorson, was in the chair.

The program, from the first note



to the last, was of a high order. Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson, who has returned to Winnipeg after several years of music study and teaching in New York, completely captivated her audience with her performance at the piano. Miss Sigurdson played selections by Chopin, Brahms and Albeniz. Miss Ingibjorg Bjarnason, well-known soloist to audiences in the Icelandic community in Winnipeg, included the Lorelei Song in her pleasing repertoire. Her accompanist was Miss Sigrid Bardal.

William M. Benidickson, guest speaker of the evening, is Member of Parliament for Kenora-Rainy River and is Parliamentary Assistant to Hon. Walter Harris, Minister of Finance in the Federal Government. Mr. Benidickson revealed sympathetic understanding of Iceland's international position and outlook and spoke with authority on Iceland and Nato, from his own visit to Iceland and from his personal contact with Hon. L. B. Pearson, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs and Canadian representative at U.N. Mr. Benidickson stressed the program advocated by Mr. Pearson for a cultural-economic as well as a political basis for Nato, and the opportunity for Canada, with her special relationship with Iceland through the Icelandic element in this country, to play an important part in bringing strategically situated Iceland into closer association with other members of Nato. Mr. Benidickson made an excellent impression.

The closing event of the three-day "mót" was the National League concert, held in the Unitarian Church. Co-chairmen of the evening were Reverend P. M. Petursson and Dr. V. J. Eylands, Vice-President and President respectively, of the League. The high standard and interest of the first two

evenings was maintained.

Guest speaker was Professor Haraldur Bessason, professor of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba. He gave a scholarly and imaginative address on the stream of Icelandic literature over a period of a thousand years.

Bjorn Sigurbjornsson, an exchange student in Agriculture at the University of Manitoba, who plans to return to Iceland next summer after five years of study in this country, was called on for a farewell address. On his return to Iceland he will receive a post in his chosen field, soil conservation and reclamation.

Njall Bardal received hearty applause for several Icelandic melodies played on the banjo, including "Stóð eg út í túnglsljósi", "Táp og fjör" and "Bí, bí og blaka". Alvin Blondal contributed highly pleasing vocal solos, including "None but the Lonely Heart" and "Without a Song". Miss Sigrid Bardal accompanied both performers. Eight year old Erla Sæmundson, worthy representative of that bastion of Icelandic in America, the Geysir district, recited two Icelandic poems, with perfect enunciation and excellent expression.

Gunnar Thoroddsen, Member of Althing and Mayor of Reykjavík, Iceland, and Valdimar Bjornson, Treasurer of the State of Minnesota, were elected honorary life members of the National League.

Reverend Eiríkur Brynjólfsson, delegate from Vancouver, was called on for a few words. The convention closed with the handing over of the gavel by the retiring President, Dr. V. J. Eylands, to President-elect, Dr. Richard Beck, of the University of North Dakota, and with the singing of "Eldgamla Isafold" and "God Save the Queen".

—W. Kristjanson

## IN THE NEWS



G. S. Thorvaldson Q.C.

G. S. Thorvaldson, Q.C., Winnipeg, Manitoba, has been elected President of the Law Society of Manitoba.

Mr. Thorvaldson was also recently appointed Chairman of the Metropolitan Services Committee of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

He has previously served as Chairman of many of the Chambers Committees and is Past President of both The Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

★

#### DR. H. HARVARD ARNASON JUDGE AT WINNIPEG ART SHOW

Dr. H. Harvard Arnason, chairman of the Fine Arts department, University of Minnesota, and director of the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, with B. C. Binning, artist and professor of art at the University of British Columbia, was judge at Winnipeg's 1956 Art Show in the Civic Auditorium last fall when a total of 317 works of art were exhibited.

During his Winnipeg stay Dr. Arna-

son was a guest of his brother, and sister-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. J. Gilbert Arnason, 416 Waverley Street. Dr. Gilbert, long a teacher in Manitoba and Winnipeg schools, is now principal of Mulvey School, one of the city's oldest.

Dr. Arnason came to adjudicate at the Winnipeg show after a year spent in Europe on a Fulbright Fellowship in the field of art. With his wife Elizabeth and daughter Eleanor and son Jon, they lived in Paris and travelled extensively.

During his travels on the Continent Dr. Arnason gave a number of lectures on American art in Sweden, Denmark, and parts of France, and visited museums and other centres of art and conferred with directors and teachers of art in the several countries he toured.

Following the Winnipeg show Dr. Arnason returned to his duties in Minneapolis. In January this year he attended a conference of American museum directors held in New York City.

★

Recipients of Winnipeg Kiwanis rural scholarship awards are **Eleanor Johannsson**, Arborg, Home Economics II, \$100.00, and **Gisli Sigfusson**, Oakview, Agriculture, \$100.00.

Eleanor is a persistent scholarship winner and won several awards as a member of the 4-H Club (See Icelandic Canadian, Autumn and Winter 1954).

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thorkell Johannsson of Arborg, Manitoba.

Gisli is the grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Sigurdur Sigfusson, pioneers of the Oakview district.

## MRS CAROLINA THORLAKSON DIES IN CALIFORNIA



Winnipeg-born and raised **Mrs. Carolina Thorlakson** died December 20 in San Francisco, after an active career as wife and missionary with her husband, Rev. S. Octavius Thorlakson, well known to Icelanders both in Canada and the United States.

Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gudjon Thomas of Winnipeg, she with Rev. Mr. Thorlakson spent a quarter century as Lutheran missionaries in Japan before returning to North America and making their home in California.

★

## CENTENARY SERVICE FOR REV. N. S. THORLAKSON

A special service Sunday, Jan 20th, in Selkirk Lutheran Church was held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late Rev. Niels Steingrímur Thorlakson, pioneer Icelandic Lutheran clergyman in Canada for some 25 years pastor of the Selkirk

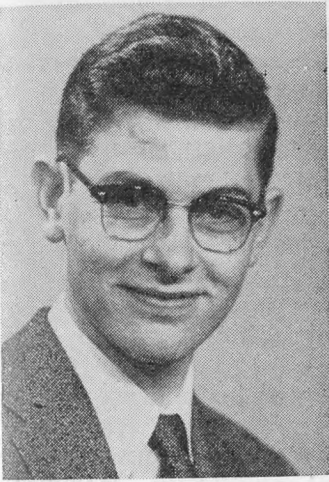
Lutheran church. It was noted he was born Jan. 20, 1857, at Grænutjörnum in Ljósavatnsskarði, Iceland, and at one time was President of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North America. Present at the Selkirk service was his son, Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson of Winnipeg, the latter's two sons, both physicians, and the wives of the three, together with Rev. Mr. Thorlakson's grandson, Rev. Eric H. Sigmar and Mrs. Sigmar.

★



A pioneer Iclander of the Canadian prairie West, **Ofeigur Sigurdsson**, died in Vancouver, B. C. on October 22nd at the age of 94. Long a friend and neighbor of the noted Icelandic Canadian poet, the late Stefán G. Stefánsson, he was one of those early Icelandic pioneers who sought to perpetuate and add to Canadiana the finer traits of Icelandic culture and age-old literature. Born in Iceland and coming to Canada as a young man he lived most of his adult life in Alberta. He was buried at Markerville, Alta., where he had at one time lived for many years.

# BRILLIANT STUDENT HONOUR- ED AT WYNYARD HOME AND SCHOOL ASS'N BANQUET.



**Shannon Martin**, a 1956 graduate of the Wynyard High School, was presented with the Bronze Medal, awarded by the Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, at a banquet held recently in his honor by the Wynyard Home and School Association.

His year's average in Grade twelve was 93.25. Shannon was the winner of the Fishman Scholarship in Grade eleven. He was chosen as Valedictorian for his class at the Graduation exercises last June, and presented with the Reader's Digest award at that time.

Other awards were the "Jack Moore" Legion Scholarship and the Foam Lake-Wynyard Unit Scholarship.

Shannon has taken part in track and field meets and was a member of the Wynyard High School Rugby team when they were three-time winners of the Provincial Championship. He has taken part in dramatics, a glee club, high school orchestra, Bryant Oratory Contests, the United Church Choir, and was a member of the Wynyard Air Cadet Squadron.

Shannon is the son of Mr. and Mrs.

W. B. Martin and grandson of Hjorleifur Hjorleifson Martin and his late wife Gudrun. ★

**Mrs. G. Waldine**, nee Lilja Stephanson of Leslie, Sask., a winner of a Bronze Medal in 1917, was present at the banquet. She is the daughter of Olafur and the late Ingibjorg Stephanson.

Other former winners mentioned were, Dick Tallman, now residing in Chicago and Esther Gudjonson Wellington, presently residing at the West Coast.

Mr. Tallman is the son of Mrs. Augusta Tallman, former Matron of "Betel", the old folks home at Gimli.

Esther Wellington's poems have appeared in the Icelandic Canadian and other magazines. She is the daughter of Pearl, nee Bardal, and the late Alfred Gudjonson of Wynyard, Sask.

★

**Prof. Helgi Austman**, member of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba, is currently pursuing studies at the University of Wisconsin leading to a master's degree in agricultural extension. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Asmundur Austman of Arborg, Man.

★

A tape-recording by Dr. Richard Beck, Professor of languages at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, was broadcast over the State Broadcasting Corporation Network in Reykjavík, Iceland, late in December.

This was by a special request of the broadcasting station in tribute to the late two well-known Canadian poets, Þorsteinn Þ. Þorsteinson and Dr. Sigurður Júlíus Jóhannesson of Winnipeg.

Dr. Beck, in two twenty-five minute talks, gave briefly an account of the lives of these two men with particular reference to their literary work and achievements.



## DISTINGUISHED EDUCATIONIST



Sylvia Vopni Ph.D.

Sylvia Vopni Ph. D. was born in Seattle, Washington. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arlo Vopni and granddaughter of the late Hjalmar (Arngrimsson) and Holmfridur (nee Jonasson) Vopni—both residents of Seattle for many years.

After graduating from the University of Washington, Miss Vopni taught in public schools in the State of Washington. In 1938 she earned a Master's Degree in Education. She then taught mathematics, science and English in high schools of Seattle. She also did some special educational work with handicapped children.

During the years of World War II, Miss Vopni was a physicist with the United States Naval Department. At the close of the war, she returned to Seattle to take up teaching duties at Seattle Edison Technical School.

In 1949, she received the Northwest Regional Soroptimist Fellowship and the following year did graduate study in Education at the University of Washington. Later she served as head of the Department of Mathematics and

Science at Edison Technical School and received research assignments with Seattle schools and the College of Education at the University of Washington.

In 1955, she completed work on dissertation (a study of vocabulary emphasis and concomitant reading scores at Junior High School level) and was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Washington, where she now holds an Assistant Professorship in Education. Besides giving courses in methods of teaching arithmetic and science to elementary teachers she gives a sequence of graduate courses in Guidance and Counseling.

Miss Vopni is a member of several cultural associations, including The American Association for Advancement of Science and the American Statistical Association. She is general Chairman of the 1957 Spring Conference of the Puget Sound Personnel and Guidance Association, which is held annually in Seattle.

Miss Vopni has contributed articles and served as editor of various educational publications. At the present time, she is national Vice-President of Pi Lambda Theta, a national honor and professional association for Women in education.

★

Two Icelandic students from Manitoba are pursuing advanced studies in Eastern Canada, **Miss Dorothy Thompson** at McGill University, Montreal, Que., and **Raymond Olafson** at the University of Toronto. Miss Thompson is the daughter of Dr. S. O. Thompson of Riverton, a member of the Manitoba legislature, and Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Olafson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Oddur Olafson, of Riverton, is studying for his doctorate in physics at Toronto University.





**Jón F. Sigurdson**

Jón F. Sigurdson has been appointed the Consul of Iceland in Vancouver, B. C. by the President of Iceland Hon. Ásgeir Ásgeirsson following the resignation of L. Halldan Thorlakson, who held this position for the past twelve years.

Mr. Sigurdson, a resident of Vancouver for many years, is President and owner of one of Western Canada's largest Building Manufacturers.

Mr. Sigurdson and his wife Ingiridur reside at 1305 West 48th Avenue, Vancouver, B. C.

★

## TWO ICELANDIC AUTHORS HONORED

Two Icelandic authors who have distinguished themselves in the literary field, were honored recently, each as the "MEMBER of the MONTH" in SCAN, a monthly magazine published by the American Scandinavian Foundation. They are **Judge Walter J. Lindal**, who received this honor following the publication of his latest book

"Saskatchewan Icelanders", and **Mrs. Jakobina Johnson** in November last.

Mrs. Johnson needs no introduction to our readers, but to quote in part an article in Scan — "She has never lost her profound love for Icelandic culture, and has done much to make it known in the U.S.A., through her numerous lectures—both in Icelandic and in English, in articles, and above all through her translations of Icelandic poetry, plays and short stories."

Mrs. Johnson's new collection of Icelandic poetry "KERTALJÓS" was published in Iceland in November. This book will be reviewed in the Icelandic Canadian in the next issue.

★

## ALICE OF CALIFORNIA — MANUFACTURING PLANT DESTROYED BY FIRE

On the 9th of January, 1957, in San Francisco, Cal., fire of unknown origin completely gutted and destroyed the factory "Alice of California", a manufacturer of Womens' dresses. This manufacturing plant is owned by Mr. Kristinn Gudnason and his sons Harold and Earl. Loss was estimated at approximately one half million dollars.

Harold, the oldest son, is the Vice-President and General Manager of "Alice", and Earl is the Treasurer and factory Manager.

The firm, which had been doing business in the building since 1946, does an annual volume of approximately two million dollars.

Friends of the Gudnasons were deeply grieved to hear of their tragic fire loss. This is clearly shown in a letter to the Icelandic Canadian magazine from California — — — "Kristinn is such a grand person, so thoroughly generous and kind — — — so loved by his customers. When we were sewing for our bazaar to raise money for the

'Borg Home' at Mountain, N.D., he donated materials and remnants so generously. Some pieces were so large and of the best quality— it looked as if he might have torn them out of bolts of goods—not remnants at all—so like him to do just that."

And to quote Reverend S. O. Thorlakson in an article about Mr. Gudnason "Kris is generous and knows that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Countless individuals have shared his bounties.

"Kris is a wonder and has done wonders with his God-given talent."

Mrs. Nina Halperin, for many years in a similar line of business with her husband, in referring to the co-operation of friends and competitors which enabled Alice of California to say on February 1, 1957 "Business as usual", says:

"This has been a fabulous demonstration of the esteem and high regard the manufacturing trade have for the firm of Alice of California.

"We have never heard of anything to equal this in all our years in the trade."

—A. E.



## UNIQUE MINGLING OF OLD, NEW WORLD ICELANDERS

There was a somewhat unique mingling of Icelanders of the Old and New World when Dr. Valtyr Bjarnason and Sigridur Johannsdottir were married in St. Paul, Minnesota, in December.

Perhaps no more illustrative account of the event could be given than that which appeared in the December 13th edition of the Pioneer Press, St. Paul. It reads as follows:

A young couple from Iceland said their marriage vows in South St. Paul Wednesday night and decided it wasn't too much different from a wedding in Reykjavik.

For one thing, the temperature outside the First Methodist church at 140 Sixth ave. N. was 4 above zero as the bride walked down the aisle.

"That is even colder than Iceland", said Sigridur Johannsdottir as she smiled from under her white wedding veil. The bridegroom, Dr. Valtyr Bjarnason, nodded agreement.

Rev. Sveinbjorn Olafsson, pastor of the church, read the marriage service from the book of Iceland's State Lutheran church in the Icelandic language. The pastor is a native of Iceland. He left there when he was 13.

"His Icelandic was fine," the newlyweds said.

The wedding audience was almost all Icelandic—friends of the couple who, like them, are studying in the United States. Bridesmaids were Johanna Kjartansdottir and Hrefna Johannsdottir, both classmates of the bride in Iceland and nursing students with her in Chicago. Two best men were Dr. Gunnar Biering, now in graduate study at the University of Minnesota, and Hjalti Tomasson of 3829 Cedar, Minneapolis.

The bride and bridegroom met at Iceland's National hospital in Reykjavik when he was an interne and she a student nurse.

When both came to this country to study, he traveled often from the Mayo clinic at Rochester to visit her, first at Presbyterian hospital in Chicago and then at North-western in Minneapolis. They became engaged and decided to marry here rather than wait until Dr. Bjarnason returned to Iceland next August.

State Treasurer-elect Val Bjornson, former Icelandic consul in Minnesota, gave the bride away Wednesday night. A reception at the Bjornson home in Minneapolis followed the wedding.

## WILLIAM JOHNSON WINS PEAK SCOUTING HONOUR

At a father and son banquet held in Cornwall, Ont., on Tuesday, Feb. 19, **William Johnson**, son of Magnus and Pauline Johnson, formerly of Winnipeg and now of Cornwall, Ont., was presented with the Queen's Scout Badge". This Badge is the peak Scouting achievement and, as far as is known to this magazine, is the first Canadian of Icelandic descent to win this high honour. At the same time he received his Ambulance, Pathfinder, Cyclist and Signaller badges. William Johnson is a member of the St. Paul's United Church Scout troop of Cornwall and the presentation was made by District Commissioner George Revell. The following Saturday Canada's Chief Scout, Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, Governor General of Canada, addressed Cornwall's more than 500 Cubs and Scouts.

Bill's father, Magnus Johnson is a son of Helgi Johnson and the late Mrs. Johnson of Ingersoll St., in Winnipeg, and his mother Pauline is the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. William G. Johnson, Acadia Apartments, Winnipeg.

★

## THE AMERICAN-ICELANDIC ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

It is interesting to note that Icelandic traditions are still being upheld in areas such as California, which were settled much later by Icelandic people than Winnipeg and Gimli. Mrs. Louise Gudmunds, representative of The Icelandic Canadian in San Francisco Bay Area reports:

"In the latter part of March 1956, the American-Icelandic Association of Northern California undertook a novel venture to attract the Icelandic com-

munity in the form of a þorrablot (a traditional sacrificial feast celebration from pagan times). It was held in San Francisco, Cal. All sorts of delicacies adorned the tables. The program comprised a group of songs by a double quartette of men under the direction of Mrs. Louise Gudmunds and a short talk by Reverend Jakob Einarson from Iceland.

On December 1st. 1956, the Association celebrated Iceland's Independence Day with a dinner and dance at the Whitcomb Hotel in San Francisco. The president of the Association, Ingvar Thordarson, presided. Steinthor Gudmunds gave a brief talk commemorating the day and its history. The Icelandic Consul, Reverend S. O. Thorlakson, read a letter of thanks to the Association from the Old Folks Home "Stafholt" in Blaine, Wash., for a gift of money in memory of its first president, Dr. A. F. Oddstad, who died in December 1955.

A short business meeting was conducted to elect officers for the coming year. Elected were: President: Dr. K. S. Eymundson, Vice-President: Sveinn Olafson, Treasurer: Steinthor Gudmunds, Recording Secretary: Mrs. Bertha Macleod, Corresponding Secretary: Miss Margaret Brandson and Publicity Chairman: Mrs. Gunnhildur S. Lorensen."

★

News has reached The Icelandic Canadian that **Bjarni Benediktsson**, a member of Althing, who was a member of the government defeated in the general election in June, is an editor-in-chief of the Reykjavík daily, Morgunblaðið, jointly with **Valtýr Stefánsson**, who is also Managing Editor. Senior editors on the staff of Morgunblaðið are Sigurður Bjarnason, member of Althing, and Einar Ásmundsson.

## THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN ANNUAL BANQUET AND DANCE

The Icelandic Canadian Club held its Annual Banquet and Dance in the Blue Room of the Marlborough Hotel on January 18th last. Miss Mattie Halldorson, President of the club, presided.

The speaker of the evening was Mr. Gunnar S. Thorvaldson Q. C., former president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. His topic "This Changing Canada" was interesting, educational and eloquently delivered. The main part of his address appears elsewhere in this issue.

Judge Walter J. Lindal introduced the speaker. He referred to Mr. Thorvaldson's recognized leadership throughout Canada in business and commercial circles and his prominence in the legal profession—senior member of the large law firm of Thorvaldson, Eggertson, Bastin and Stringer.

Other items on the program included vocal solos by Miss Helga Swanson of Riverton, Manitoba, and Mr. Alvin Blondal of Winnipeg. Mrs. Jona Kristjanson was the accompanist.

Professor Haraldur Bessason spoke briefly and greetings were brought from the Icelandic National League by Dr. Valdimar J. Eylands.

It was gratifying to see a large attendance of young students of Ice-

landic extraction. Each one was introduced by Miss Mattie Halldorson. They were as follows:

Joanne Kjartanson, Steep Rock, Science.

Anne Stefanson, Steep Rock, Science.  
Ólöf Baldwinson, Thicket Portage, Arts.

Helga Baldwinson, Thicket Portage, Science.

Nancy Biggs, Winnipeg, Nursing.  
Beverley McGowan, Winnipeg, Nursing.

Barbara Einarson, Winnipeg, Nursing.  
Fern Calverly, Bissett, Arts.

Willie Arnason, Gimli, Agriculture.  
John Marteinson, Langruth, Arts.  
Douglas McCausland, Boissevain, Agriculture.

Hugh Scott, Bissett, Arts.

John Thordarson, Westbourne, Agriculture.

Gilbert Sigurdson, Winnipeg, Agriculture.

Arthur Bryant, Winnipeg, Agriculture.  
Dennis Eyjolfson, Winnipeg, Daniel McIntyre Coll.

Dancing began shortly after 9 o'clock and continued through until midnight to the music of Jimmy Gowler's Orchestra.

The evening was a wonderful success and great credit is due the president and committee in charge. —A.E.

## NEWS SUMMARY

Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson of Winnipeg, a governor of the American College of Surgeons, presented the charter at the organization meeting in Winnipeg of the Manitoba Chapter of the American College of Surgeons. The ceremony took place Jan. 19 in the Manitoba Medical College, University of Manitoba. The American College of Surgeons was founded in 1913 by surgeons in Canada and the United States.

The Children's Magazine, *Æskan*, published in Reykjavik, Iceland, dedicated its Christmas issue to the memory of the late poet **Sigurður Júlíus Jóhannesson**.

Dr. Jóhannesson was one of the first publishers and the first editor of this popular magazine.

Besides an article of commemoration by Dr. Richard Beck the issue included three short stories by the poet.



At the invitation of the United States State Department, **Gustav Sigvaldason**, a senior official of Iceland's air ministry, toured the United States last fall and in the course of his travels visited Icelanders in Utah and North Dakota. At Grand Forks he was guest of Dr. Richard Beck, professor of Scandinavian languages at the University of North Dakota, and at the invitation of Carl J. Amundson, airport chief, inspected the air terminal and facilities at Grand Forks. He continued thence east through Minneapolis to the Atlantic seaboard on his return to Iceland.

★

An Icelander, **Vilhjalmur Einarsson**, came near to winning top honors in an event at the Olympic games in Australia last summer. He came second in the hop-skip-and-jump competitions, losing out to a Brazilian, Ferreira Da Silva, in the final. Called to the press gallery for an interview, a press representative there noted "we speak Russian, Greek, Swedish and Japanese, but Icelandic not—what other language do you know?"

Replied Mr. Einarsson: "I know English—I learned it at Dartmouth College in the United States."

★

A short time ago the National Symphony of Iceland invited **Frú Guðmunda Elíasdóttir**, the noted Icelandic soprano, now residing in New York, to sing in Reykjavík. She took the leading part in Verdi's opera, *Il Trovatore*, which was staged seven times in the Reykjavík Opera House before packed audiences. Frú Guðmunda also sang four times over the national radio network.

A Bill is before Althing, the Icelandic Parliament, authorizing the government to invite Icelandic singers abroad to visit Iceland and appear in the National Opera House.

**Priemier D. L. Campbell** of Manitoba laid the cornerstone of the new structure of Betel, Icelandic Old Folks' Home at Gimli, Man., at formal ceremonies Nov. 21 last. Presiding was **Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson** of Winnipeg and speakers were **Hon. R. W. Bend**, Manitoba Minister of Health and Public Welfare, **Barney Egilson**, Mayor of Gimli, **Rev. Dr. V. J. Eylands** and **Rev. Philip M. Petursson** of Winnipeg. Benediction was by **Rev. S. Olafsson**. Visitors attended from Winnipeg, Selkirk, Riverton, Arborg, Hnausa, Arnes and elsewhere.

★

In the recent Mayoralty elections in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, Mr. Helgi Loptson was elected Mayor of the town.

Mr. Loptson came to Foam Lake from Churchbridge, Sask., in 1936.

He has been in the merchandising business in partnership with his father, Hjalmar Loptson, for the past several years.

★

The 70th anniversary of the founding of the Ladies' Aid of First Icelandic Lutheran Church in Winnipeg was observed November 21st with the organization's customary autumn sale and program. Many long-time members attended. Speakers recalled the aid's history and growth through the years.

★

**Rev. Skuli Sigurgeirson** was inducted on Dec. 16, 1956 as pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Edmore, North Dakota. Prior to going to the Edmore charge Rev. Mr. Sigurgeirson was pastor of a Lutheran congregation in Duluth, Minnesota.

★

Three Wynyard students, who wrote their grade one music Theory exams in Saskatoon recently received exceptional marks, Audrey Axdal 99 per cent, Ellen Johnson (Mozart, Sask.) 98 per cent, and Marilyn Gudnason 91 per cent.



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# SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



**Doris Lillian G. Spring** was awarded a Manitoba Brewers' and Hotelmen's Scholarship of \$200.00 for 1956.

Doris completed grade twelve with high marks last June, at the age of 17.

She is in her second year Home Economics at the University of Manitoba.

Doris is the daughter of Svava, (nee Johnson) and John G. Spring of River-ton, Manitoba.

★



**Kristine Anna Josephson** was award-

ed a Manitoba Scholarship of four hundred dollars for 1956.

She is 18 years of age and attending second year Home Economics at the University of Manitoba.

Kristine is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arni Josephson of Glenboro, Man.

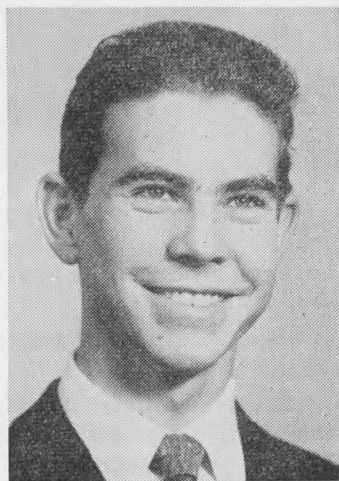
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**Roger Eyvindson** received a Manitoba Scholarship of \$400.00 for high scholastic standing.

He is at present taking first year Agriculture at the University of Manitoba.

Roger is 18 years old, the son of Kartan and Mary Eyvindson of Carberry, Manitoba.

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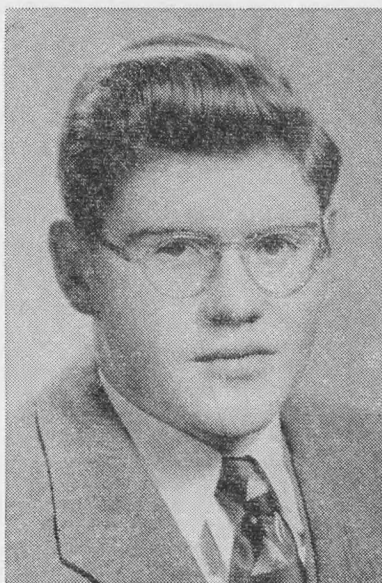
**John K. Marteinson**, a second year student in Arts at the University of Manitoba, was awarded the Gudrun Norman Scholarship of \$100.00 for 1956, The Manitoba Scholarship of \$400.00, and the Langruth Legion Scholarship of \$100.00. He also won

the Langruth Legion Scholarship of \$100.00 in 1955.

This brilliant scholar was born at Langruth, Manitoba, on February 14, 1939, and attended the Langruth Elementary and High School.

John is the son of Jón and Laufey (nee Fjelsted) Marteinson of Langruth.

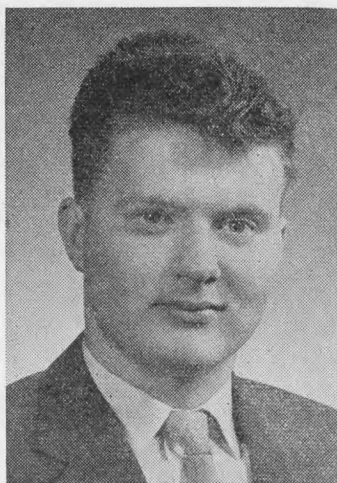
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Bui Thorlacius, 21, was awarded a Scholarship of \$150.00 by the Board of Governors and Senate of the University of British Columbia.

He is now taking second year Commerce at the University of B. C.

Bui is the son of Jóna (nee Sigurdson) and her late husband Bui Thorlacius, formerly of Ashern, Manitoba.



Thor Jacobson was presented with a Manitoba Brewers' and Hotelmen's Association Scholarship of \$200.00 for 1956.

He was born in Brandon, attended Public School in Flin Flon and later Kelvin High School in Winnipeg. He is now in second year Engineering at the University of Manitoba.

Thor is the son of Margaret and her late husband Victor Paul Jacobson and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. John Thorleifson of Winnipeg.

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## Mrs. Margaret Palsson Ramsay Wins \$1500.00 Fellowship



Mrs. Margaret Palsson Ramsay

On Tuesday, March 19, a fellowship amounting to \$1,500.00 was awarded to Mrs. A. D. Ramsay by the Western Canada Region of the American Federation of Soroptimist Clubs, Incorporated, at a dinner meeting of the Winnipeg Soroptimist Club in the University Women's Club.

Miss Marjoria Moore, chairman of the Western Canada regional award committee, and head of the Family Bureau of Winnipeg introduced Mrs. Ramsay and Miss Mary Woodside presented her with a cheque for the first moiety of the Fellowship.

Miss Lillian Aylesworth outlined the

objects of the Federation and stated that the fellowships are made as an aid to higher education and are awarded to women who have already given evidence of a capacity for leadership in their chosen work.

Mrs. Ramsay graduated in Arts from the University of Manitoba in 1940. Last September she commenced a course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Social Work, which she will receive in June. The second moiety of the Fellowship will be presented next fall when Mrs. Ramsay commences her post-graduate work at the University of Manitoba leading to the degree of Master of Social Work.

Ever since her graduation in Arts Mrs. Ramsay has, in addition to her home duties, been busy in Home and School Association work, in social service and in community enterprises of various kinds. She worked two years for the Family Bureau and did Juvenile and Family Court work for another two years.

Her husband, Andrew Douglas, is a chartered accountant in the service of The Public Press Ltd. and The Country Guide. They have three children: Pall Douglas, age 13; Marlene Anne, age 9; and Laurene Fjola, age 7.

Margaret Ramsay is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Pall S. Palsson, of Gimli, who for many years resided on Banning Street and elsewhere in Winnipeg.

—W. J. L.

## AUTOMATION COMES TO THE ARMY

The Canadian Army will have its first experience with automation soon when an electronic data processing machine is put into operation with an Ottawa pay corps unit. No. 1 Army Pay

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